DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 091 898 EC 062 055

AUTHOR	Kulicheva, N.
TITLE	Organisation of Recreation for the Blind in the USSR.
INSTITUTION	All-Russia Society for the Blind, Moscow (USSR).
PUB DATE	72
NOTE	41p.; Materials for the Session of the Executive Committee of the World Union for the Welfare of the Blind, For related documents, see EC 062 052-054 and 056-058
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.75 HC-$1.85 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; Braille; Dance; Dramatics; *Exceptional Child Services; Foreign Countries; Library Services; Music; Physical Activities; Reading; *Recreation; Talking Books; *Visually Handicapped
IDENTIFIERS	All Russia Society for the Blind; *Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; USSR

ABSTRACT

The booklet contains a brief description of recreation under the auspices of the All-Russia Society for the Blind in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and a number of photographs illustrating recreational activities. It is noted that approximately 24,000 blind persons participate in recreational activities located in club rooms near their residences and places of work. Mentioned are the following opportunities: participation in instrumental groups such as folk and brass bands, dramatic groups, amateur art groups, study in adult education courses involving 5,000 persons, reading books (braille or talking books) provided by the Prosveshchenie Publishing house in 71 regional libraries, and participation sports involving 22,000 persons in areas such as chess - the favorite - field and track and gymnastics. It is explained that the blind in the Soviet Union have families, work they like, recreational facilities, and opportunities to attend concerts, operas, the cinema, or ice hockey. Included among photographs are portrayals of a group from the Sverdlovsk Club performing the "Youth Dance" and two blind chess masters watched by fans at the Soviet vs. Yugoslavia chess tournament. (MC)

N. Kulicheva

ORGANISATION OF RECREATION FOR THE BLIND IN THE USSR

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THE ALL-RUSSIA SOCIETY FOR THE BLIND

ORGANISATION OF RECREATION FOR THE BLIND IN THE USSR

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MATERIALS FOR THE SESSION
OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF THE WORLD UNION
FOR THE WELFARE OF THE BLIND

MOSCOW—1972

The system of social development of the blind in the USSR is founded on humanistic principles, which, in its turn, is based on concern about man, about his all-round development. It is based on scientific data about the possibilities of the development of compensatory processes in blind people who together with all the citizens of the Soviet Union create material values.

Good conditions of work and recreation have been created at the training and production enterprises. Short working day, two days-off a week, a 24-day annual vacation allows to make use of free time in the most useful and interesting way.

Clubs and recreation rooms where you can take it easy, read or listen to a book or an interesting lecture, play chess or draughts, attend a concert or have a chat with friends. All the clubs and recreation rooms are conveniently situated near the places of residence or work. Nearly 24,000 blind participate in the work of the various circles and amateur art groups, each selecting an activity to his or her liking.

Participation in the amateur art groups helps to develop aesthetic and creative approach in life and sometimes professional mastership. This becomes particularly evident on the example of the development of choral and musical

circles and groups. Its participants learn to read music, study theory and history of musical art. Of note are choral groups of the national republics, the Russian folk song and academic choirs.

An accordion, Russian national, folk and brass bands, instrumental and stage art groups enjoy great popularity. Along with bands and choirs there are numerous quartets, trios and duets.

At the dramatic groups blind people learn stage speech and acquire freedom of movement, master professional stagecraft. These groups stage plays of one and many acts. The participants of the dance groups master plasticity, rythm, get rid of constraint and learn to orient themselves on the stage. These groups are especially popular with young people.

The participants of amateur art groups get acquainted with the creative work of the artists, playwrights, composers, wisit museums, theatres, attend concerts in order to broaden their knowledge and outlook, to better convey the idea of a musical, dramatic or dance number. All this enriches their spiritual world and makes their life more interesting.

The repertoire of the groups whose performance skill is very high includes the works of Russian and foreign classics, contemporary writers, playwrights and composers.

The Society organises competitions of the groups and individual performers. Besides the groups take part in the competitions of various organisations in our country. Numerous prizes won by the blind performers speak about their high professional skill. One can get acquainted with it at numerous concerts which they give to their colleagues and to the public.

Thousands of adult blind with incomplete education wishing to continue it study after work. To create favoura-

ble conditions for obtaining education special educational establishments have been organised in the Soviet Union. Among them are day and correspondence schools for the working youths, consultation rooms opened at the training and production enterprises of the Society. Today over 5,000 blind study at 12 day and correspondence schools and 208 consultation rooms. The schools function in Gorky, Kemerovo, Kuibyshev, Leningrad, Moscow, Novosibirsk, Perm, Rostov-on-Don, Sverdlovsk, Kazan, Chistopol, Chelyabinsk. The network of schools and consultation rooms embraces all those wishing to study either in towns or villages. Besides the blind may continue their education if they wish at ordinary schools together with children with normal sight. All special schools have proper material basis, qualified personnel of teachers-defectologists. The entire study process at these schools is organised in full correspondence with the requirements of typhlopedagogics.

Enthusiastic and highly-qualified effort of the teachers make the activity of the schools and consultation rooms very effective. The majority of the several thousand teachers both blind and those who can see are defectologists with higher education working in schools for adult blind.

The system of education for adult blind, just as the system of general education, is run by the state. Tuition is free of charge, besides state privileges students get subsidies for readers from the funds of the Society for the Blind. Students annually receive great number of accommodations at sanatoriums and holiday homes.

The book, a source for enrichment of knowledge, enjoys great popularity among the blind. It helps them to get to know more fully the surrounding world, acquaints with various problems of life not only in the Soviet Union but also in other countries of the world. The blind read

books in braille editions and recorded on tape. Books for the blind in braille editions are published by the Prosveshchenie (Enlightment) Publishing House. In the last four years the publishers put out 1,150 titles of social and economic, fiction and SF books in braille editions. Besides, also in braille, are Russian and foreign classics, textbooks for secondary schools, works of literature within the syllabus of a secondary school and certain textbooks for higher schools. The total print of the periodicals in braille copies is over 20,000. Among them are magazines "Our Life", "The Appeal", "Literary Readings" and also thematic collections of methodological trend: "In the World of Music", "Amateur Art", "Assistance to Cultural and Educational Workers", "Physical Culture and Sports", "Chess and Draughts". The construction of a new printing house which is to be started in the near future will considerably increase the number of books and magazines in braille editions.

Blind people can get books in a special library for the blind. The RSFSR Ministry of Culture has organised a wide network of such libraries. They are run and financed by the state under the direction of the Ministry and with active assistance of the Society. Today state libraries for the blind operate in the republican (autonomous), territorial and regional centres. All in all, there are 71 libraries, totalling 1,400,000 titles in braille editions. Each library has a mobile section and an inter-library exchange 992 branches and mobile libraries have been organised at the training and production enterprises, clubs, recreation rooms and primary organisations.

The use of libraries is free. Blind can get books directly at the libraries or order it by post or by telephone. Books can be obtained at a specialised bookshop Rassvet, which sends out books by post to all corners of the Soviet Union.

Popular among the blind is, the so called, "talking

book". The total "print" of these "talking books" today is 26,600 copies. The All-Russia Society for the Blind set up a studio for recording books on magnetic tape which records annually over 65 titles. The texts are read by radio announcers and by actors. Every library for the blind has a special "talking library" where the blind can either listen to the recorded book or take it home with them. For this purpose tape recorders are being sold to the blind at a discount. The "talking books",just as books in braille editions, are being mailed to all towns and villages in the Soviet Union free of charge.

Much attention in our country is devoted to the all-round education including education of the blind people. The All-Russia Society for the Blind creates all the conditions for the blind to get education, develop their talents and gifts broaden their knowledge through book reading and to be physically fit.

Physical culture and sports have become part of the blind people's life. Physical culture is an effective means of improving their health and, chiefly, the means of partial compensation of blindness by improving motive-muscular sensitivity. The sport helps the blind to correct his carriage, improves his gait and co-ordination of movements, instills moral and will qualities such as courage, agility, strength and endurance. That is why sport in the Society has become mass phenomenon. Blind people engage in gymnastics, acrobatics, track and field, swimming, rowing, Greco-Roman wrestling, skiing and skating.

Sports sections were organised to this end at the training and production enterprises and clubs attended by over 22,000 blind sportsmen. Chess and draughts are the most popular sport among the blind. It is taken up by more than 14,000 people. Among them are 4 Masters of the USSR in chess and 3 in draughts, 33 Candidates Masters, 700 blind

have the First and over 1,500 the Second and Third Categories.

The blind athletes not only attend sports circles and sections but also take part in various sporting competitions conducted by the All-Russia Society for the Blind.

Blind sportsmen compete successfully on a par with other sportsmen at the All-Union chess and draughts competitions. They invariably capture first places in individual and team events.

At the 9th International Athletics Competitions for blind youth the Soviet sportsmen have won the first place for the fifth time running capturing 33 out of 43 medals including 15 gold, 9 silver and 9 bronze. The programme of the competitions included 11 track and field events — running 60, 100, 400, and 800 metres, long and high jumps, triple jump, shot put, tarowing cricket ball with the loop, javeline and triple event.

The Soviet team of blind chessmen captured the first place at the Third International Olympiad held in London in 1968.

In 1968, 1969 and in 1971 the Soviet chess team came on top in the tournament against the Yugoslav chess team, the Europe's strongest.

Many of the blind take up tourism as the past time. In addition to active recreation, they improve their health, season their organisms, develop endurance, agility and ability to orient themselves. While on hiking trips they learn the necessary skills, get into closer contact with nature, visit historical monuments and get first-hand knowledge about the surrounding world.

The Society has proper material basis for the development of the physical culture and sports. Gyms, pitches and tourist bases have all the necessary equipment. Blind sportsmen are offered a wide selection of tourist and sports

gear at their sporting bases. They have at their disposal an in-door swimming pool operating all-round the year.

Work on physical education of the blind is carried out in co-operation with the country's sports organisations. Blind athletes are members of the Spartak sports club. The sports and mass work of the Society is founded on scientific and methodological basis. The Central Board has developed and issued methodological aids in track and field, Greco-Roman wrestling, gymnastics, skating and swimming.

Blind people of various ages are engaged in sports. So called health groups function in many towns of the Soviet Union attended by elderly people. Various physical excersises, the observance of the correct regimen, proper combination of the work which is in one's power and recreation help the blind to retain cheerfulness, love of life and longevity.

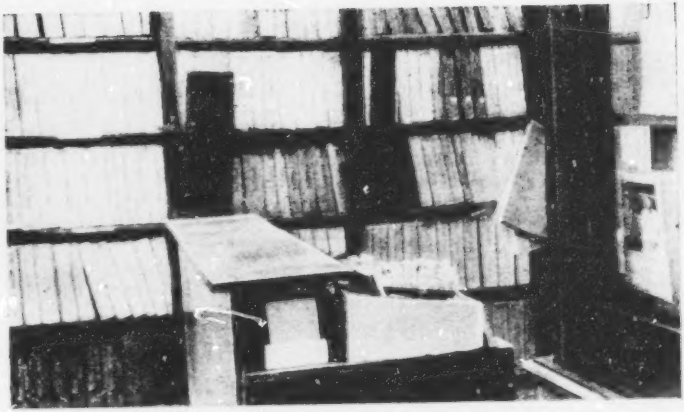
The blind in the Soviet Union live a full-blooded life. They all have a family, a work they like, they can study if they wish and have all the recreation facilities at their disposal. They attend concerts, visit opera theatres, go to various shows or to the cinema or have a quiet evening at home by the TV set, or attend a football or ice-hockey match of the favourite team. This is all within their power because the life of the blind person in our country is in no way different from that of the sighted people.

1/2 | 3

The Central House of Culture of the All-Russia Society for the Blind in Moscow is one of the best of the Society... It is the methodological centre of the cultural and educational work of the Society

The hall of the House

The Central Library of the All-Russia Society for the Blind is well stocked with various political, scientific, fiction and specialised literature



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A stand of Braille editions at the Central Republican Library

At the recording studio of the All-Russia Society for the Blind. Working on the manuscript of the "talking book"

Making copies of the "talking books"

1 | 3
2

"Talking books" enjoy wide popularity among the blind

At the Central Republican Library students prepare for the examinations with the help of a "talking book"

At a physics class in the Moscow day and correspondence school for the adult blind people

1 | 3
2 |

A dog is a reliable helper of the blind

A masseuse, a musician, a student, a teacher and a worker are all members of one close-knit family

A specialised shop Rassvet where the blind can buy everything they need

1 | 2

A dance group of the Sverdlovsk Club for the blind performs "Youth Dance"

The workers of the Ufa factory for the blind perform a Bashkirian dance

1 | 3

At a rehearsal of the brass band of the Serpukhov factory for the blind

2 | 3

Dance group of the Pravda factory club in the Gorky Region

A worker of the Krasnodar factory for the blind rehearsing Beethoven's "Moon Sonata"

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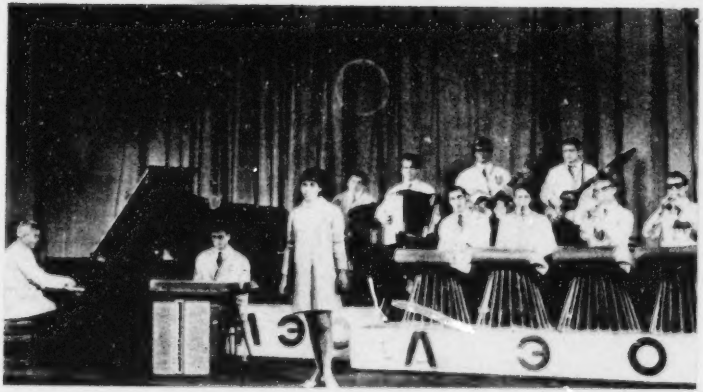
Estonian folk dance performed by the workers of the Luzhsk factory

Vocal ensemble of the Vologda factory

Lubertsy factory variety group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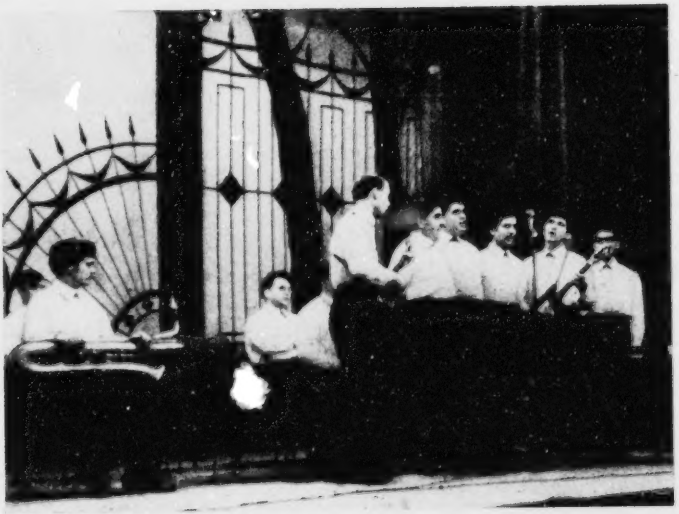
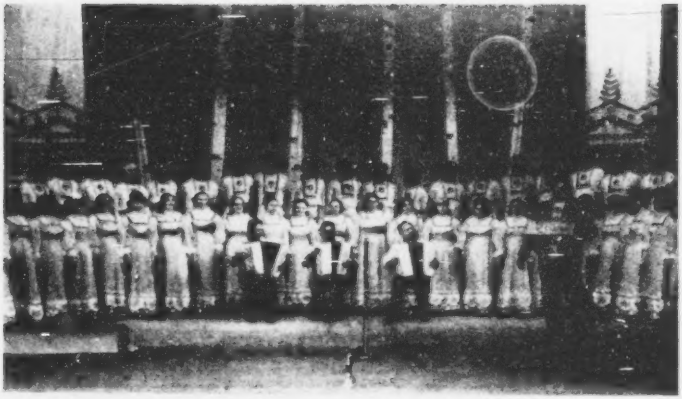
A vocal ensemble of the Leningrad House of Culture

A young soloist of the amateur art group of the Kaluga enterprise for the blind





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The Russian folk choir of the Brynsk enterprise
The beauty and elegance of the Ossetian dances
Daghestan rhythms of an instrumental trio

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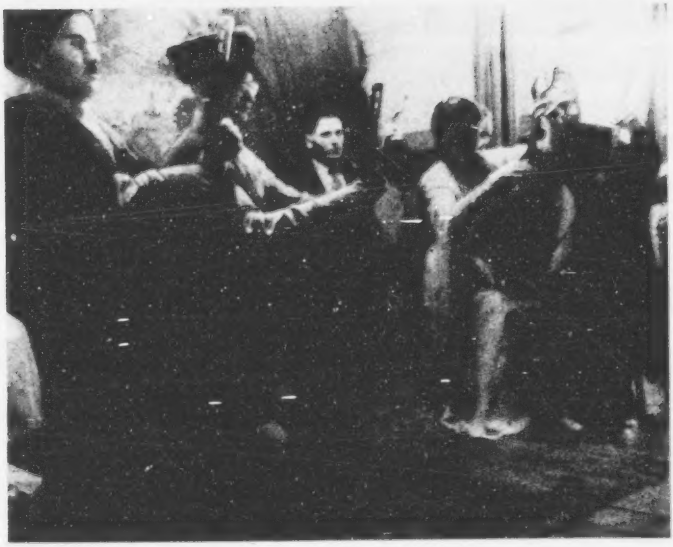
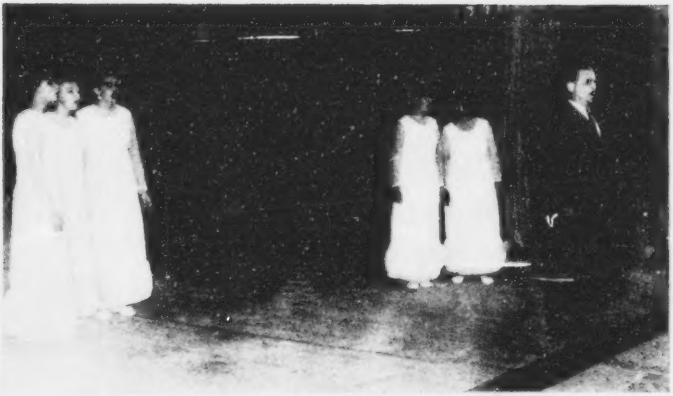
String orchestra of the Daghestan Society for the Blind

Fiery dances of the peoples of Daghestan

Girls from Daghestan





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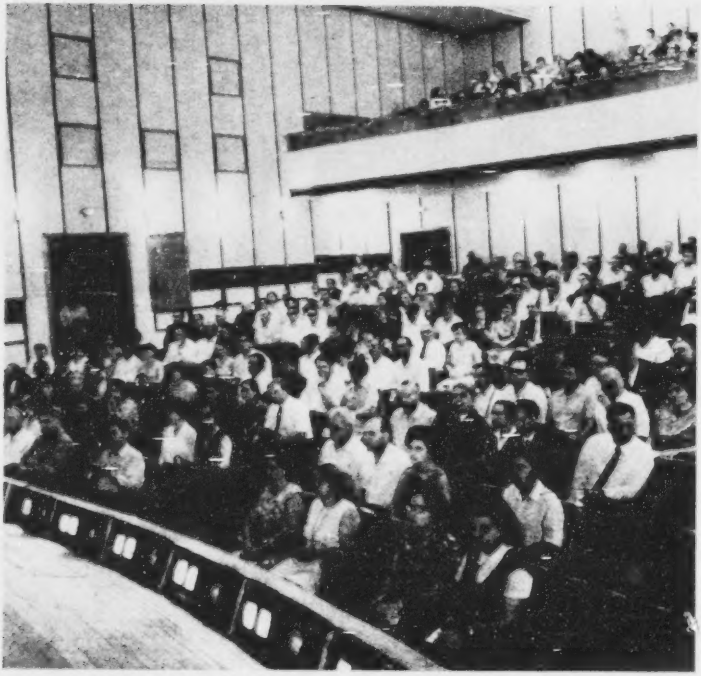
The vocal ensemble of the Armavir factory

The men's vocal ensemble of the Lublino factory

Enjoying a concert at the Leningrad House of Culture named after Sholgunov



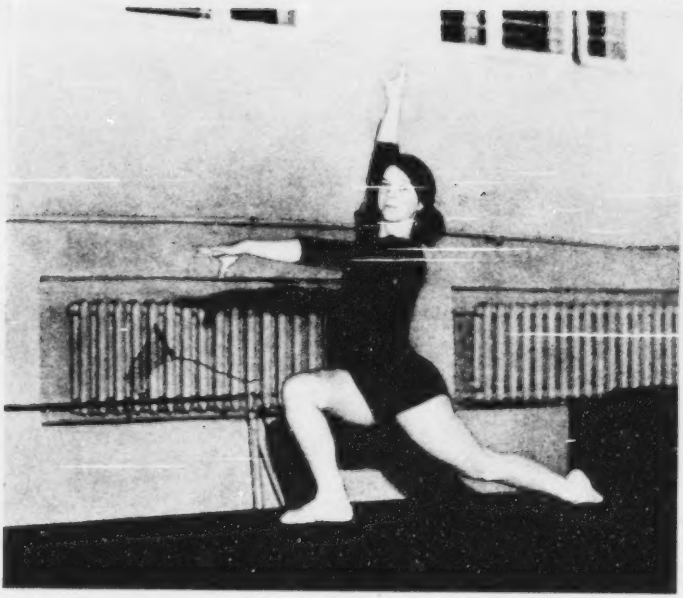
1 | 2 A quiet spell among the friends
Many members of the Society go in for tourism

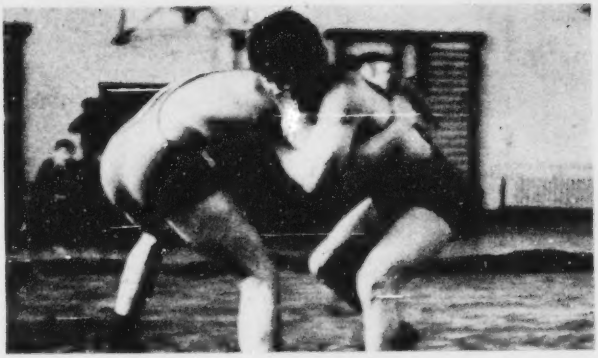
1 | 2

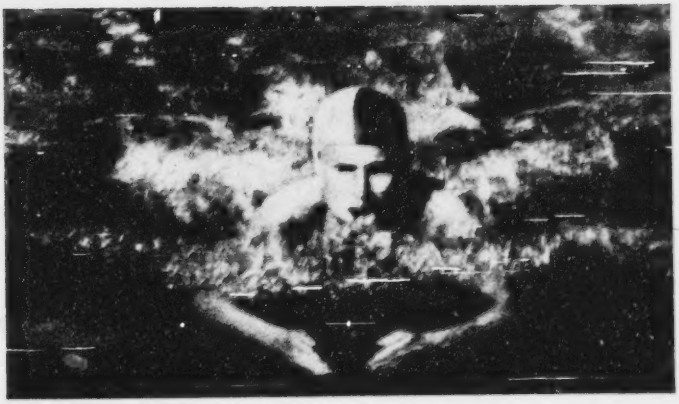
Chess fans
At the Soviet vs Yugoslavia chess tournament

В. Миркович
Н. Руденский
СССР

Gymnasts show their mettle







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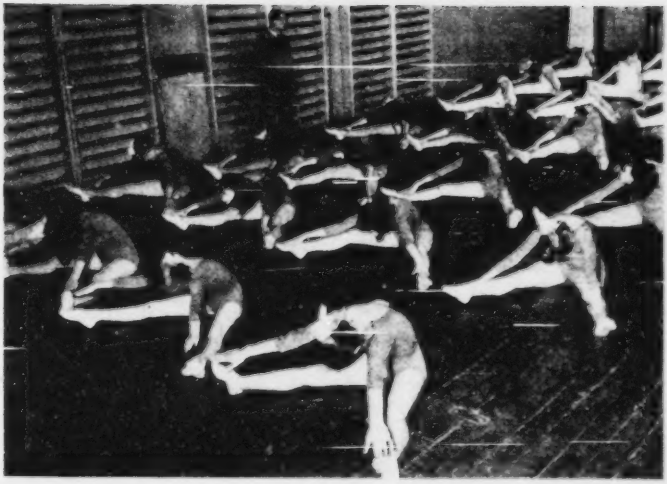
A wrestling bout
A time for the swim
Medical gymnastics at a school for the blind children



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At a session in weightlifting
Muscovites at a training session
All-Russia ski competitions